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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal Spirit, our shelter in the time of storm, when our hearts grow faint and weary, renew our strength and enable us to soar above our challenges.

Today, fill our lawmakers with the spirit of wisdom. May their different approaches to problem-solving for our Nation and world contribute to more effective solutions for freedom in the years to come. Lord, deliver our Senators from the spirit of pessimism, and bless them as they seek to honor You. In their thoughts, words, and deeds, may they passionately strive to glorify You, ever seeking Your divine approval.

We pray in Your Holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRAMER). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Kenneth Kiyul Lee, of California, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

PENTAGON OVERSIGHT

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to shed light on yet another really dark cloud that is hanging over our Department of Defense. In fact, for decades, a dark cloud of fiscal mismanagement has loomed large over the Pentagon. During my very first term here in the Senate, I began my quest to bring fiscal accountability to the Pentagon. Four decades later, I am still keeping tabs on the money trail. That money trail is sometimes difficult to follow. Back then, it was a bit like David taking on Goliath.

We all know that the United States of America has the strongest and mightiest military in the world. I am thankful for that because a strong military is not meant to fight a war; it is meant to maintain the peace. We haven't had a world war III since we have had a strong military.

Our brave men and women who serve in the U.S. Armed Forces protect our shores at home and abroad to keep us safe and to protect the blessings of liberty for our children and grandchildren. That is exactly why it is so very important to keep check on the Pentagon's ledgers, to help make sure that every tax dollar assigned to the Nation's defense is actually spent effectively and not squandered on waste, fraud, and abuse.

With the help of brave whistleblowers who stuck their necks out to "commit

truth," I stuck my neck out during the Reagan administration. That is when I learned about the Pentagon's little shop of price horrors.

Of course, ripping off the taxpayers started during the Revolutionary War, when contractors sold rotten meat to the Continental Army, and it continued during the Civil War, when profiteers sold ammunition filled with sawdust and shoddy shoes and horses to the Union Army. It looks like it continues to this day.

Back in 1985, Americans will recall, the Defense Department was shelling out vast amounts of taxpayer dollars for spare parts. Remember back then the \$450 hammers and the \$640 toilet seats? That sounds like a real bargain compared to the more recent wasteful spending at the Pentagon, such as the \$1,280 coffee mug and the \$14,000 toilet seat lid. Obviously, the cost of waste is getting a whole lot more expensive for our taxpayers.

Back in the 1980s, I fought to win a spending freeze on unchecked spending sprees. Misspending and overspending were riddling the defense budget at the expense of the American taxpayer.

Military readiness drives the spending decisions that Members of Congress make when we cast our votes on the defense budget. Our constituents expect their elected representatives to make sure that the moms and dads, sons and daughters, brothers and sisters who are serving our country in uniform are well equipped with the best resources money can buy. But they also expect their elected representatives to make sure their hard-earned dollars that are withheld from every paycheck—their tax dollars—are not being ripped off by greedy corporations, like TransDigm Group, Inc., which I will speak about in a moment.

That is why I conduct robust oversight of defense spending. As a taxpayer watchdog—and all of us are supposed to be watchdogs, and all of us would claim to be watchdogs—it is our

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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